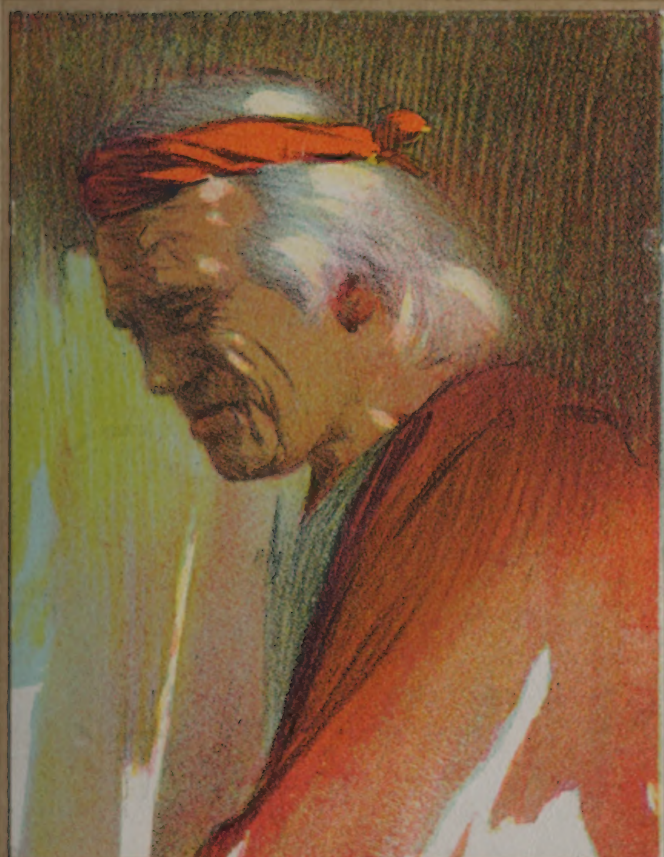


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Handicraft of the Southwest Indians



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From the ethnologic collection of Fred Harvey
at Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Fine Arts Institute
1020 McGee Street
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1916

THE SOUTHWEST—Nearly four hundred years ago from Old Mexico and Spain came hundreds of adventurers into the Southwest in search of riches, of lands to conquer, and of peoples to convert. Among the first in the year 1540, was Coronado, a Spanish Conquistador, a daring, fearless soldier, a dreamer in search of wealth and power and honor. With him came his lieutenants, Castaneda, Alvarado, Cardenas and Pedro del Tovar, and the padre, Fray Marcos, and many others from Spain, lured to this unknown land that presumably contained fabulous riches and strange peoples. Coronado marched and counter-marched his small legion over the entire Southwest, through parts of Mexico, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, and even as far north and eastward as Kansas. He and his lieutenants penetrated the unknown fastnesses of forest and canyon and desert. His historian, Castaneda, of Najera Spain, wrote an account of the expedition "in which all those settlements, their ceremonies and customs are described." In his wanderings he came upon the towns of Cibola, seven Indian villages, perched high on desolate mesas where he found a people whose civilization was surprisingly developed. Many other tribes of Indians he discovered, whose houses, several stories high, faced upon regular village streets, and whose cattle and farms covered the surrounding hills and fertile valleys. Plains and lofty ranges he crossed, but he found no riches. Then came the righteous men—the Jesuits and Franciscans who established many mission churches and first carried Old World Civilization into this land. His story was history two hundred and fifty years before the American Revolution and more than half a century before the earliest settlements on the Atlantic Shores. This was the setting and these the first characters in the story of the Southwest.

THE NAVAHO—Centuries ago, the Navaho dressed in fibre mats and skins. The Spaniard in the early years of his conquest brought with him the first sheep to this continent. Pueblo women introduced into the Navaho tribe taught the Navaho the art of weaving. Today the name Navaho is inseparably linked with the blankets that have come to be prized as among the most striking and beautiful example of native crafts. Some of their beautiful "bayettas" are superior in softness of coloring and quaintness of design to the antique rugs of the Orient. The Navaho makes, or has made, several distinctive kinds of rugs, namely; the old bayettas, old native wool and native dye blankets of striking color combinations and symbolic design, and the modern native wool, warp and weave.

The term bayetta is taken from the name of bayetta cloth originally made in Barcelona and brought to America by the Spaniards. The Indians would barter for the cloth, unravel it and weave it in.

From the Mexican the Navaho learned the silver-smith's art; today their hand wrought rings, bracelets, necklaces and other ornaments overlaid with barbaric symbols are hammered out of metals in the same crude way and with the same crude tools they used centuries ago.

Acoma blankets differ from the Navaho in that the border design, emblematic of clouds and rain, is worked out in relief with vegetable dyed wools and bayetta; the background is of carefully selected black wool.

Antique rugs of the Orient are each year imported into this country in quantities. The old blankets of the Navaho and Hopi are rapidly becoming extinct. To preserve these products of a vanishing race, there has been prepared a series of facsimile paintings showing the design, color and weave of some of the best specimens extant. A number of these are exhibited.

THE HOPI—The Hopi, centuries ago, built their homes on the tops of the most inaccessible mesas, far over in Northeastern Arizona. It meant defense and protection to them but it also meant hardship. To this day they live in these fastnesses.

The Hopi are a kind, peaceful people—their very name signifies peace. Theft is rare and murder unknown; in fact crime is so unusual that they seem to have no punishment except for sorcery.

The Indian woman was not only the originator of the arts among the native Americans but she has been the zealous perpetuator as well. In making pottery the Hopi like the other Pueblos uses neither measure, model, nor potter's wheel. All is done with the hands. A few tools hardly more than sticks or brushes are the instruments. In the uses of materials, the clays, and pigments, the methods are as complex as the tools are simple.

The Hopi for centuries have engaged in a ceremony known as the Snake Dance. In this dance poisonous serpents are handled. The dance is held every year in some of the villages, and like nearly all ceremonies in this desert land, is a prayer for rain. Four days are spent in hunting snakes. As a coiled rattlesnake is spied, a pinch of sacred meal is cast upon the serpent and a prayer addressed to it, a stick with two long buzzard feathers on the end is slowly waved over the reptile and as it coils, is seized and slipped into a buckskin sack. The reptiles are taken to the Kiva, or underground ceremonial chamber. On the ninth day, they are bathed in a basin of sacred water. At sundown the snakes are carried to the plaza where there is singing and dancing. As one priest takes a snake in his mouth the other attracts it with the whip of feathers. The dance over, the snakes are carried to the foot of the mesa and set free.

Among the Hopi there are other spiritual rituals such as the flute ceremony, the basket dance, etc. In some of the dances, there are masked performers called Katcinas, who represent certain definite elements in Hopi rituals; replicas of these as dolls are called Tihuis and a number of such including snake dancers are exhibited—each different, each grotesque, yet each representing some sign, some phase or some personage of Hopi mythology.

THE PUEBLO—Even in the day when Christopher Columbus was a boy, there were little republics scattered through a portion of the America he was to discover. These people of the unknown country built many storied houses made of stone, recognized property rights, had their traditions and religions and chose men to make and administer laws. These Indians were farmers and irrigators before the new world was discovered. Today, they are neither poor nor naked. They feed themselves and ask no aid from Washington.

The pueblos, or villages are generally built in terrace fashion, the upper tiers of houses setting back from those below, so that the roofs of lower houses form a front yard for those above.

As may be surmised from the foregoing, the culture center of Aboriginal America was among the Pueblos of the Southwest. These people as aborigines expressed their art sense in pottery. Today the Pueblo tribes of New Mexico and Arizona practice the art in its aboriginal form with little or no variation. The art was restricted almost exclusively to the women, a condition that holds good today.

The potters wheel was unknown and so never were two pieces of pottery exactly alike. The colors usually employed are black, white, yellow, red and brown. Geometric and symbolic designs are used mostly with the triangle predominating. Many of these designs indicate lightning, rain and clouds. Next in frequency are the figures derived from birds and animals, and last come decorations suggested by leaves and flowers.

Some of the work is lustrous and appears to be glazed. That is not the case however, as the Indian has never fully mastered the use of salt in the clay mixtures. The sheen comes from careful rubbing with a polishing stone.

Some prehistoric Hopi pottery and pottery from ancient cliff dwellings are exhibited.

The collection of war shields, made of Buffalo Hide, has many interesting features. It is against the traditions of the tribe for a Pueblo Indian to sell these shields for any purpose even to ward off poverty and starvation.

BASKETRY AND BEADWORK—It may be said that every Indian from the land of the Esquimau down through Mexico, was a basket weaver. True, to many it meant little more than plaiting a grain receptacle of coarse willows, or a cradle, or a shelter—or garments.

Contrast this purely utilitarian basketry with the delicate weave of the Poma Indians—500 stitches to the square inch. Then there is the work of the Tulare people who weave yarn in with the vegetable fibre. The wedding plaques of the Navaho used in the marriage ceremony, the fibre weaving of the Chimehuevi, the Mission and the Hupa, the water-tight basket of the Apache or his storage granary, or his rawhide decorated burden basket. The Pima makes a basket quite similar to the Apache. The Pima and Apache originally used geometric and symbolic designs, but of later years the Apache has combined with these human and animal figures.

Baskets there are of every kind and for every use from water-tight cooking utensils to pouches as fine and as pliable as silk.

Beadwork as an Indian art is of comparatively modern origin, as before the advent of the white man beads were unknown. The Indian eagerly seized upon the idea of decorating his buckskin garments with the vari-colored bits of glass using his knowledge of basketry for the foundation of the stitch and his love for the symbols of his tribe for the decoration and design.

Indian mythology is as varied as the symbols representing the various personages. Whereas one tribe being a people of the hunt would deify the God of the Chase, another of peaceful and agricultural tendencies would deify the God of the Harvest. All of them deified the elements and had their Gods of Wind and Rain and of Thunder and Lightning and of Battle and all recognized some Great Spirit. All carried with them or kept with them in their daily life, some symbol of their belief.

Condensed Catalog of Exhibit

NAVAHO BLANKETS, Old and Modern.
NAVAHO HAND WROUGHT SILVERWARE.
NAVAHO WEDDING BASKETS.
NAVAHO LOOMS—With partially completed blanket,
showing method of weaving.
HOPI POTTERY, Ancient and Modern.
HOPI CEREMONIAL DOLLS—Including characters in
Snake Fraternity.
HOPI CEREMONIAL GARMENTS.
HOPI PRAYER STICKS.
HOPI BASKETS, From Various Pueblos.
HOPI CEREMONIAL DRUMS.
HOPI WEDDING DRESS.
HOPI CEREMONIAL MASKS.
PREHISTORIC POTTERY, From the cliff dwellers.
PREHISTORIC FIBRE SANDALS.
PREHISTORIC FEATHER CLOTH MOCASSINS.
OLD POTTERY FROM ZUNI.
PUEBLO POTTERY—From Acoma, Zuni, Santa Clara,
OLD BUFFALO SKIN WAR SHIELDS.
MOCCASINS, From Various Tribes.
BEADED LEGGINGS.
BEADED BUCKSKIN BRIDAL DRESS.
TURQUOISE DRILLS.
FEATHER HEAD DRESS.
ACOMA WEDDING DRESS.
RARE OLD HUPA DANCE DRESS AND APRON.
VERY RARE SANTA INEZ MISSION BASKET
DANCE APRON.
PAPAGO POTTERY.

BEADED PIPE BAGS.

UTE BUCKSKIN BEADED GARMENTS AND ORNAMENTS.

KIOWA ORNAMENTS.

APACHE BUCKSKIN GARMENTS AND UTENSILS.

APACHE BASKETS—White Mountain and San Carlos.

PIMA BASKETS.

TULARE BASKETRY.

SHOSHONIAN BASKETRY.

HUPA BASKETRY.

POMA BASKETRY.

KERN RIVER BASKETS.

KLICKITAT BASKETS.

SINEW BOWS AND ARROWS.

PAPOOSE CARRIERS.

STONE WAR CLUBS.

STONE PIPES

PIPE BAGS, Porcupine Quill Decorations.

NAVAHO SILVER BRIDLE.

NAVAHO SADDLES.

UTE SADDLES.

NAVAHO RAWHIDE ROPES.

BELTS, Beaded.

NAVAHO BELTS, Silver.

CHIMALLO TEXTILES.

MEAL TRAYS, Various Tribes.

POWDER HORNS.

BEADED COLLARS.

JADITE STONE BEADS, FROM CASAS GRANDES,
Prehistoric.

JADITE CARVED STONE IDOLS FROM CASAS
GRANDES, Prehistoric.

POTTERY FROM CASAS GRANDES RUINS.

RARE UTE SHIRT, Porcupine quill ornament.



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